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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000181

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E
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CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: TFG AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO GERMANY
REPORTS TRANSFER OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Classified By: ERIC WONG, DEPUTY POL-ECON COUNSELOR. REASON: 1.4 (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. In a January 22 meeting with deputy pol-econ counselor and German DCM, Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Embassy counselor Abdisalam Warsame Hassan reviewed recent developments in Somalia. TFG President Yusuf had not been harmed by the January 19 mortar attack on the presidential palace in Mogadishu, Hassan said, nor had there been any casualties. Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum was visiting Mogadishu, accompanied by an Ethiopian Airlines assessment team studying the feasibility of establishing direct commercial flights to Addis Ababa. Hassan reported that Kenya had transferred 34 foreign fighters of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) to the TFG's custody, which included ethnic Oromo insurgents from Ethiopia, Eritreans, and possibly some European nationals. They would be tried in Mogadishu, not repatriated. Noting that the CIC's top security official had fled to either Germany or Saudi Arabia, Hassan defended the recent impeachment of TFG Parliamentary Speaker Sharif Hassan, citing Sharif's contacts with CIC leadership. Hassan expressed concern about reports of increasing insurgency within Ethiopia itself, and control by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) of key areas in Ethiopia's Somali region. He noted that Uganda had recently appointed a commander for two battalions that could deploy to Somalia, and confirmed that Iran was interested in uranium sources in Somalia. END SUMMARY.

TFG PRESIDENT UNHARMED BY MORTAR ATTACK

12. (C/REL FRG) Hassan confirmed that a single mortar round had hit the presidential palace in Mogadishu on January 19, fired from the adjacent grounds of the former German embassy. Hassan reported no casualties, and said that TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf had not been harmed. According to Hassan, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin was visiting Mogadishu on January 22. (NOTE: In a separate meeting on January 23, Ethiopia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Tekeda Alemu confirmed that FM Seyoum had visited Mogadishu, and noted that Seyoum had returned to Addis Ababa accompanied by TFG President Yusuf, in order to meet with Prime Minister Meles. END NOTE.)

KENYA HANDS OVER CAPTURED FOREIGN FIGHTERS

13. (C/REL FRG) Kenya had transferred 34 foreign fighters to the TFG's custody on January 21, Hassan said. The fighters included ethnic Oromo insurgents from Ethiopia; Eritreans; and "some foreigners," possibly including German and Danish passport-holders, he said. Hassan did not have any information indicating that any transferred fighters were U.S. or UK nationals. The combatants were now being held by the TFG in a detention center in Mogadishu. The ICRC would be allowed access to the detainees, he said, but it was unlikely that any third-country nationals would be repatriated, as the TFG would seek to prosecute them in Somalia. "We will keep jurisdiction," he said. Questioned about CIC foreign fighters, Hassan noted the difficulty of identifying the nationality of those who had been killed, as many had been buried immediately (e.g., at Dinsor).

14. (C/REL FRG) Mohammed Indho-Adde, Security Secretary for the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), was reportedly in Germany for medical treatment, Hassan said, although the TFG had also received information that he may have fled to Saudi Arabia with USD 3 million. German DCM could not confirm whether Indho-Adde had traveled to Germany, speculating that he may have obtained a Schengen visa, using a Djiboutian passport or documents for a false identity.

IMPEACHED TFG SPEAKER CONSULTED WITH CIC LEADERSHIP

15. (C/REL FRG) Noting recent USG statements critical of the
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TFG's recent impeachment of Parliamentary Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, Hassan defended the TFG's action, asserting that the Speaker had abandoned his official duties for several months. Instead of following instructions to head the TFG delegation to the second round of TFG-CIC talks in Khartoum on October 31, the Speaker had traveled to Saudi Arabia and Dubai to meet with CIC Executive Committee Chairman Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, before going to Tehran to meet CIC Shura Chairman Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, Hassan said. TFG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Constitutional and Federal Affairs Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail had thus led the delegation to Khartoum. Hassan agreed with German DCM's assessment that the Speaker was "politically dead" and had few followers.

CONCERN ABOUT RISING INSURGENCY IN ETHIOPIA

16. (C/REL FRG) While the Ethiopian military had been relatively successful in Somalia, Hassan expressed concern about increased insurgent activity within Ethiopia itself. Hassan reported increased activity by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in several of the nine zones of Ethiopia's Somali region, especially near Gode and in Dhagah-bour; the Garbo District; the Fiiq zone; and the Wardher Zone, whose Danot District he said the ONLF now controlled.

17. (C/REL FRG) According to Hassan, Ugandan President Museveni had appointed a force commander on January 21 to lead two Ugandan battalions for IGASOM, who reportedly could deploy to Somalia within two weeks. TFG Ambassador to Ethiopia and PermRep to the African Union Abdikarin Farah was currently in Brussels, Hassan said, lobbying for EU support for IGASOM and the TFG.

TFG SEEKS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, AIR LINKS WITH ETHIOPIA

¶18. (C/REL FRG) Questioned about how Somalia would engage politically with Somaliland, Hassan said he had posed the same question recently to TFG President Yusuf. Hassan reaffirmed TFG sovereignty over Somaliland, and questioned how Somaliland would be able to sustain itself economically, given lack of resources. In contrast, he noted that the President of Puntland, who recognized TFG authority, would meet development cooperation officials in Germany, and was facilitating investment by Australian and Chinese interests in Puntland mining ventures.

¶19. (SBU) Hassan said an assessment team from state-run Ethiopian Airlines was in Mogadishu to examine the feasibility of establishing direct commercial flights between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu. Such flights would compete against those now going through Hargeisa, in Somaliland, he noted.

IRANIAN INTEREST IN SOMALI MINERAL RESOURCES

¶10. (C/REL FRG) Hassan confirmed that an Iranian delegation, accompanied by an Italian geologist, had recently visited Somalia to examine possible uranium sources. He observed that the CIC had received weapons from Iran, and that many such armaments had been buried by CIC forces at Baledogle.

EXPECTATIONS FOR UPCOMING AU SUMMIT

¶11. (U) Noting that the previous African Union Summit in July 2006 had resulted in a communique affirming the legitimacy of the TFG, as well as a decision to forgive Somalia's arrears for unpaid contributions, Hassan said TFG officials hoped the upcoming AU Summit in Addis Ababa would result in greater international support for Somalia. TFG President Yusuf

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planned to attend the summit, he said, along with Foreign Minister Ismail Hure Buba, Deputy PM and Minister of Constitutional and Federal Affairs Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, and Minister of Planning Hussein Elabe Fahiyeh.

¶12. (U) BIO-NOTE: Abdisalam Warsame Hassan, currently assigned to the TFG's embassy in Addis Ababa, is the TFG ambassador-designate to Germany. He commented that he had not returned to Mogadishu since 1993, when he was working there as an interpreter for the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). During that period, he was involved in a boat capsizing, and had to swim for an hour and a half before being rescued. He first came to Addis Ababa in 1993 to attend UN-sponsored Somali peace talks. A fluent English speaker, he most recently resided in Germany.
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